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Hindu Religious Revival under Akbar: Patronage, Promotion, and State-Sponsored Propagation

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Abstract: Akbar's religious policies marked a significant shift from earlier Mughal and Sultanate approaches, emphasizing *sulh-i kull* (universal peace/toleration). While often framed as syncretism or tolerance for governance, his reign coincided with, and actively supported, a revival in Hindu temple construction, pilgrimage, and cultural expression, particularly in Braj (Vrindavan-Mathura) and other sacred sites. This was achieved through direct patronage, land grants, tax exemptions, administrative integration of Hindus, and state-sponsored cultural exchanges. It was pragmatic (empire-building) but also reflected genuine curiosity, leading to a flourishing of Hindu institutions under Mughal oversight.

Keywords: Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Hindu, Promotion, Sulh-i kull.

Historical Context (Babur and Humayun)

Zaheeruddin Mohammad Babur (1483-1530) was the ruler of Kabul established his rule in India (1526-1530) by defeating Sultan Ibrahim Lodi and Rana Sanga. Now it has become the stereotype raking that Babur was an anti-Hindu ruler and was Babur responsible for destroying a temple and building a mosque over there in Ayodhya. In this regard it must be cleared that Babur had a habit of writing a diary of daily events which was known as *Tuzuk-i-Babari* or *Memoire of Babur*. In his Memoire, he mentions all the events related to him including social political and religious affairs. Even he mentions flora-fauna, fruits, birds, geography, society and politics, war, peace and even the history of India. Even he didn't forget to mention to consume *Majoon* while moving from one place to another. But he didn't mention any event of temple destruction or religious intolerance. It shows that if there was any mosque built on that place, it was built by his general Mir Baqi as mentioned in some of the sources. As per the sources of the archaeological excavations, it might had been built on the plain mound and whatever the structure was beneath the mound was the matter of the past.

Babur went there along with his generals Chin Taimur Sultan, Kazak and Baqi went there in pursuit of their enemy Shaikh Bayezid in 1528 but never stayed such a long time to build a mosque. His returned back to settle the affairs in and aroud Agra and Delhi. Babur says in his *Memoir*, "We were still a march or two from Oudh (Ayodhya),- when a messenger arrived from Chin Taimur Sultan, with intelligence that the enemy were encamped on the other side of the Saru (Saryu), and that he would require to be reinforced. I dispatched to his assistance a thousand of the best men from the centre, under the command of Kazak. …till that day. Shaikh Bayezid had kept his station, not far from Oudh, on the other side of the Saru. ….There were about fifty horses, with three or four elephants, on the other side, who, being unable to stand their ground, took to

flight. ….Those who had passed over first continued till evening prayers in pursuit of Shaikh Bayezid, who threw himself into a jungle, and escaped. …. Baqi Shaghawel with one division, following close upon the enemy, overtook their baggage and families, and brought in a few of the Afghans as prisoners. I halted some days in this station, for the purpose of settling the affairs of Oudh and the neighbouring country, and for making the necessary arrangements."[1]

Babur was a true politician and better knew how to rule such a country whose inhabitants were fond of their religion and culture. He was quite sure that India is his last destination and Indians are their subjects and it was his duty to take care of his subjects. He never tried to interfere with their religion and guided his *Amirs* and his sons to respect the sentiments of the Indian people if they continue to rule India for a longer time.

As for Nasiruddin Mohammad Humayun (1508-1556) ruled the country (1530-40&1555-1556) was as tolerant as his father Babur. During his lifetime Babur had warned to his son Humayun about the Indian political system which has been quoted from the English Daily *The Dawn*, 25 December 2010:[2]

"Oh my son! The realm of Hindustan is full of diverse creeds. Praise be to God, the Righteous, the Glorious, the Highest, that He hath granted unto thee the Empire of it. It is but proper that you, with a heart cleansed of all religious bigotry, should dispense justice according to the tenets of each community. And in particular refrain from the sacrifice of the cow, for that way lies the conquest of the hearts of the people of Hindustan; and the subjects of the realm will, through royal favour, be devoted to thee. And the temples and abodes of worship of every community under Imperial sway, you should not damage. Dispense justice so that the sovereign may be happy with the subjects and likewise the subjects with their sovereign. The progress of Islam is better by the sword of kindness, not by the sword of oppression. Ignore the disputations of Shias and Sunnis; for therein is the weakness of Islam. And bring together the subjects with different beliefs in the manner of the Four Elements, so that the body politic may be immune from the various ailments. And remember the deeds of Hazrat Taimur Sahib Qiran (Lord of the conjunction) so that you may become mature in matters of Government. And on us is but the duty to advise."

Following his father's advice Humayun in his reign adopted a very tolerant policy towards its Hindu subjects and even the Hindus of enemy states and its Hindu rulers. When his father's enemy Rana Sanga was poisoned to death by his nobles, the Mewar state was ruled by his son Ratan Singh ruled briefly and assassinated. Banbir, an illegitimate son of Prithviraj (elder brother of Rana Sanga) was main villain in these assassinations. After Ratan Singh, the next ruler was Vikramaditya, the son of Rana Sanga and Karnavati-grandma of famous Maharana Pratap. Meanwhile in 1535 Bahadur Shah of Gujrat attacked Mewar. It is said that Rani Karnavati sent *Rakhi* along with a letter of help to Humayun to save Chittor in these hours of crisis. By sending the *Rakhi*, she symbolically adopted him as a brother and appealed for his protection. At that time Humayun was in Bengal campaign but returned on the call of his *Rakhi* sister Karnavati. In between Bahadur Shah overpowered the Mewar and Karnavati committed *Jauhar* along with many other Rajput women. Humayun attacked Bahadur Shah and freed Mewar and restored the rule of Vikramaditya.[3] In 1536, Ranbir killed Vikramaditya and usurped the throne. He also tried to kill Udai Singh (founder of Udaipur), the younger son of Rani Karnavati but he was saved by a maid Panna Dhai. Banbir ruled the Mewar state from 1536-40, but was defeated and killed by Uday Singh II (1540-72).

Jalaluddin Mohammad Akbar

Jalaluddin Mohammad Akbar (1556-1605) was born on 15th October 1542 to Nasiruddin Mohammad Humayun and Hameeda Bano Begum at Umarkot, a Rajput principality in Sindh. Umarkot or Amarkot was a Rajput principality under Rana Virsal alias Rana Prasad. On his father's death, Akbar was in the military

campaign at Kalanaur against Sikander Sur. At Kalanaur Akbar ascended the throne on the symbolic platform at the age of thirteen years. When Akbar intended to return Delhi, it was already captured by Hemchandra (Hemu), a commander of Adil Shah, who ascended the throne of Delhi with the title of Vikramaditya. Akbar marched towards Delhi and both the forces met at Panipat on 5 November 1556, in which Akbar became victorious and successfully ruled the country about fifty years.

As a ruler, Akbar was most tolerant and liberal to his subjects and adopted the policy of *Sulh-i kull*. Although there was no religious tussle or controversy among the Hindus and Muslims yet he wanted to bridge the each and every gap in the society. He provided religious freedom and even freedom of converting Muslims to the Hindu fold. He appointed Hindus on the higher posts of revenue, military and administration.

Abolition of Taxes: Emperor Akbar abolished the Pilgrim Tax in 1563. In 1563, when Akbar was encamped at Mathura, a religious festival was going on at that time. On hearing the petition of the local people about the pilgrim tax, he ordered to stop the collection of the pilgrim tax. Akbar further removed all restrictions on the building of places of public worship as well. Emperor Akbar abolished *Jaziya* in 1564, and certainly, it was turning point in the history of Muslim rule in India. With its abolition, Akbar created common citizenship for all his subjects, Hindus and Muslims alike. It may be added here that *Jaziya* was abolished years before liberal courtiers Abul Fazl and Faizi were introduced to the emperor.[4]

Building of Temples: Emperor ordered the building of numerous public temples in the famous places of Hindu pilgrimage. The rajas made most of their opportunities and built temples dedicated to their favourite gods. Raja Man Singh built a temple at Vrindaban at a cost of half a million rupees and another at Banaras. A cultured Muslim traveller describing some of these temples in his travel diary compiled early in the reign of Jahangir was so pleased with the beauty of their structure that he wished they had been built in the service of Islam rather than Hinduism. Several Jain temples seem to have been built at Satrunjaya and Ujjain. Local tradition credits Akbar with the presentation of a golden umbrella to the shrine of the fire goddess of Jwala Mukhi in the modern district of Kangra in the Himachal Pradesh. Bhavani's temple below the Kangra fort was allowed to be repaired and the idol restored to its place of honour. Akbar allowed the Hindus of Thanesar to rebuild the temple in the sacred tank at Kurushetra. Similarly, he had the temple at Achal Makani near Batala rebuilt.[5]

Religious Assembly and Akbar's New Belief: Akbar's another measure of setting peace among the peoples of different faith was the establishment of the religious assembly (*Ibadat Khana*). He thought that if some true knowledge were thus everywhere to be found, why should truth be confined to one religion, or to a creed like Islam, which was comparatively new, and scarcely a thousand years old. It was for the discussion of philosophy and religion and a process to know the facts and good things of all the religions. It was commenced in 1575 and came to an end in 1582. Every Friday night (Thursday evening) the meetings of the philosophers of colleges and monasteries were held in the Imperial presence. Besides them, the Sufis, doctors, preachers, lawyers, Sunnis, Shi'as, Brahmans, Jains, Buddhists, Char-baks, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and learned men of every belief, were gathered together in the royal assembly and were filled with delight. Each one fearlessly brought forward his assertions and arguments, and the disputations and contentions were long and heated. Every sect, in its vanity and conceit, attacked and endeavoured to refute the statements of their antagonists. Even the theologians of the same sect fought and declare heretic to each other. One night the *Ibadat Khana* was brightened by the presence of Padre Radalf, who for intelligence and wisdom was unrivalled among Christian doctors. Several carping and bigoted men attacked him and the statements were torn into pieces. This prejudice and violence greatly annoyed the impartial mind of the emperor.[6]

Nurul Haq in his *Zubdatu-t Tawarikh*, says that up to the time 1578, Akbar used to attend public worship at the five stated times, whether he was in the capital or in camp, and the reciters of the Quran, who were on the royal establishment, used to read that sacred book both at prayer and at other times. Indeed, the king himself used to take the lead in worship. But on the strange incidents of *Ibadat Khana* was the king's abandonment of the national religion, which became a stumbling-block to many people weak in the faith. The cause of this dereliction was, that the court had become the centre of attraction to all sects, persuasions, and people, to the learned of Khurasan, Iraq, Mawarau-n Nahr (Transoxiana), and Hindustan, to doctors and theologians, to Shias and Sunnis, to Christians and philosophers, to Brahmans and professors of every existing religion. The king used openly to say in the presence of his officers, doctors, and chiefs:[7]

"My sole object, oh wise Mullas, is to ascertain the truth, to find out and disclose the principles of genuine religion, and to trace it to its divine origin. Take care, therefore, that through the influence of your human passions, you are not induced to conceal the truth; and say nothing contrary to the almighty decrees. If you do, you are responsible before God for the consequences of your impiety."

Next year in 1579, as Akbar was annoyed with the theologians, he displaced the chief Imam or the regular preacher at the chief mosque in Fatehpur Sikri to emphasize his position as both the spiritual and temporal head of his realm. After few months Akbar issued the infallibility decree declaring himself the absolute temporal and spiritual head in his realm. Within a week he left for what turned out to be his last visit to Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti's tomb Ajmer. The promulgation of this decree has given rise to the belief in Akbar having founded a new religion called Din-i-Ilahi.[8]

Promotion of Hinduism: Under Akbar the idol worship was never discouraged. He allowed his Hindu spouses to perform their religious rites in the palace. This had its effect upon his religious attitude to his people. If idol worship was tolerated in the palace, it would have looked rather unreasonable to prohibit it outside. Akbar, thus, came to be surrounded by Hindu influences at home which must have worn away the natural repugnance of a Muslim for Hindu practices.

Akbar tried to break through the barriers which were keeping the two communities apart. He organized a translation department which, among other things, was entrusted with the task of translating the religious books of the Hindus into Persian. He ordered that the Atharva Veda, the Mahabharata, the Harivansa and the Ramayana be translated into Persian.[9]

Akbar, in the forty-fifth year of his reign issued order that the Hindus converted to against their will at any age, could return to the religion of his forefathers. The permission to make converts was a very great concession to the members of other faiths. These liberal policies of Akbar permitted his Muslim and non-Muslim subjects to live together in peace without any fear of their religious activities being checked.[10]

However, Akbar's Hindu promoting policies encouraged their morale as high as they began to destroy the mosques and built the temples over there. In Akbar's time, the eminent Islamic theologian Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi complained that the Hindus are demolishing mosques and are building their own places of worship in their stead. In Thanesar in the Kurukhet (Kurukshetra) tank, there was a mosque and the shrine of a saint. Both these have been destroyed by the infidels and in their place, they now have a big temple. Again, the Hindus perform their rituals and religious practices freely while the Muslims find themselves helpless and are unable to execute ordinances of the *Sharia*. On the day of *Ekadashi* (eleven days after the moonrise) when Hindus abstain from eating and drinking, they see to it that the Muslims also do not cook, sell or buy anything in the towns. On the contrary, in the month of Ramzan (the month of fast for Muslims), they cook and sell bread in the market openly.[11]

It is notable that until the age of Akbar and also during his age, Lord Rama had no place in the temples and minds of the people. During the whole medieval period, Lord Krishna and Lord Shiva (in the form of *Linga* worship) were the dominant gods occupying the religious places of Mathura, Vrindavan and Varanasi. Akbar himself promoted the Krishna cult through Raja Man Singh at Vrindavan and Shaivism through Raja Todar Mal at Varanasi. Till that time Ayodhya was not at all religious place. But the recent excavations prove the city of Ayodhya was a Buddhist religious place during the time of Ashoka and Kanishka. However, during the time of Babur, Ayodhya was a ruined place having no religious importance. Babur's general Mir Baqi might have built there a mosque for the Muslims of that area and also to commemorate his victory.

Through the Translation Bureau (*Maktab Khana*), Akbar ordered the translation of sacred texts like the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* into Persian, making Hindu philosophy a part of courtly discourse. During his period, a Vaishnavist poet Tulsidas (c. 1532/1543-1623), wrote a text titled *Ramcharitmanas*, based on the Valmiki's *Ramayana* at Varanasi. Tulsidas was close to several movers and shakers at the Mughal court including Raja Man Singh. As the *Ramcharitmanas* of Tulsidas was in vernacular language Hindi, it became much popular in the Hindi speaking belt of north India. It began to be read and played as Rama Play (Ram Lila) throughout north India.[12]

In the succeeding centuries Rama emerged as God and his temple began to be built in the North as well as in the rest of India in the modern period. But it is a matter of shame that after five hundred years later a mosque is dismantled in Ayodhya when a secular government was ruling the country in the presence of a secular constitution protecting the rights and religion of the Indian citizen.

Hindu Appointments: Emperor Akbar abolished the humiliating distinctions between his Hindu and Muslim subjects. By offering lenient terms to the conquered, by allowing them, in the case of Rajputs, to retain their territories as a fief from the Imperial Government and by other generous measures, he made it easier for his opponents to submit to such a magnanimous foe. Akbar started appointing the Hindus on higher posts as they were fit for. Out of 137 *Mansabdars* of 1,000 and above14 were Hindus. Out of 415 *Mansabdars* of 200 or above, 51 were Hindus. Out of 415 *Mansabdars* of the rank of 500 horse or above, 56 were Hindus. Todar Mal became Akbar's Finance Minister and for some times his Prime Minister as well. Man Singh, Bhagwan Das, Raj Singh and Todar Mal served at various times as governors of provinces. Raja Rai Sigh of Bikaner was another most trusted Rajput *Mansabdar* of Akbar.[13]

Sri Ram Sharma says that the percentage of Hindu officers in Akbar's army was higher than the percentage of Indian Officers holding the Kings' commissions in the Army in India before World War II. Against four governors in Akbar's reign of half a century, there was only one Indian Governor in India during a century and a half of the British rule till 1937. No one in British India ever rose to the high rank which Todar Mal held as the Vicegerent and Finance Minister. Of the twelve provincial finance ministers appointed in 1594-95, eight were Hindus. During Akbar's reign the Hindus, who ran the lower sections of the accounts and the revenue departments of the empire were promoted to higher ranks in the administration. Further, Akbar devised another channel for the utilization of the administrative talents of the Hindus. Akbar set up new courts under Brahman judges to decide such cases.[14]

During the time of Akbar, there was no discrimination between Hindus and Muslims, regarded Hindus as his subjects, not the infidel. From the very beginning, Akbar had a Hindu impact on his mind as he was sheltered by a Hindu king of Umarkot when he had to flee from a powerful Muslim enemy. He married the daughter of the raja of Amber Bharmal and brought the raja, his son Bhagwan Das and the grandson Man Singh into the Mughal hierarchy as Amirs (noble), his most trusted lieutenants, allowing them to retain their land, their

Hinduism and their caste status. Besides them, another jewel of his court was Raja Birbal, a Brahman by caste. He was the only Hindu who joined Akbar's Divine Faith.[15]

Another Hindu Jewel of his court was Raja Todar Mal, a Kshatriya by caste. He was a leading general, Finance Minister and also the Prime Minister. It must not be forgotten that the same Todar Mal was staunch Hindu, a devotee of Lord Krishna, famous for setting the image of Krishna and in 1572, had gathered a group of Varanasi scholars to compose a giant Sanskrit compendium of Hindu culture and learning, the *Todar-Ananda* (Todar Bliss). In it, he criticized, in general, the "aliens" (*Malecchas*, surely meaning the Muslims), and in particular the rulers of darkness (*Tamas*, possibly meaning his patron Akbar).[16]

He was even many steps ahead in maintaining peace and communal harmony. Abolition of the Pilgrim Tax, the abolition of *Jazia* and commencing the practice of *Jharokha Darshan*, etc. were totally to appease his Hindu subjects of the country. Burning of the widows in the Hindu society greatly annoyed his mind and on the consultation of the Brahmans and his Hindu courtiers, he practically banned the Sati system which was actually a murder and highest level of gender discrimination. Akbar also ordered for translation of many Sanskrit Hindu religious books including Ramayana and Mahabharata which promoted the liberalism and tied the Hindu Muslim knot closer. In the reign of Akbar, all the Hindus were fairly treated in the court, in the appointment, in the beneficiary policies of the government and opportunities of the state. There is no trace of a single event which shows that there had been any discrimination in providing justice from top to bottom.

Beef Ban: Akbar also appeased the Hindus by forbidding the use of beef as the cow was considered a sacred animal by the Hindus. Badayuni records the fact that the Hindus kill good men if they kill cows. In 1583, Akbar forbade the killing of animals on certain days. In 1590-91, Akbar is said to have forbidden the eating of the flesh of oxen, buffaloes, goats or sheep, horses and camels. Fishing also was prohibited for some time when Akbar visited Kashmir in 1592. Akbar, however, respected the feelings of the Hindus enough to abstain from the use of some of these articles.[17]

Hindu Festivals and Customs: Akbar started participating in some of the Hindu festivals. The Rakhi was celebrated in the court when the Brahmans came to tie strings of different types of threads to the imperial wrists. Akbar also started celebrating in the Dipavali, the festival of lamps and Holi, festivals of the colours. Akbar made another attempt to maintain peace and tranquility in India by reforming society. He conditionally abolished the cruel practice of Sati in the Hindu society. *Akbarnama* mentions that in the interior of Hindustan it was the custom, when a husband dies, for his widow willingly and cheerfully to cast herself into the flames (of the funeral pile). In 1583, Abu-l Fazl reports, Akbar decreed that if a Hindu woman wished to be burnt with her husband, they should not prevent her, but she should not be forced, and women who had children were not allowed to burn themselves. Akbar appointed the inspectors in every city and district, who were to watch carefully over these two cases, to discriminate between them, and to prevent any woman being forcibly burnt. Child marriage was also prohibited and widow remarriage was promoted during Akbar's rule.[18]

Anti-Muslim Acts: Al-Badayuni, the contemporary chronicler severely criticizes the religious policy of Akbar and proves through his writings that the policies of Akbar were anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic. He says that Akbar made the wearing of silk dresses and ornaments obligatory at prayer times. He forbade Islamic prayers. He discontinued public prayers and the call to prayers in the Assembly Hall. He forbade Muslim fasts. Pilgrimages to Mecca were stopped. Muslim festivals were discontinued. Mosques and prayer rooms were turned into stables and given to Hindu *Chowkidars*. Akbar, when in need of money, would even plunder mosques. Shaving the beard was allowed with the support of the unprincipled and scheming Mullas. The eating of the flesh of tigers and wild boars was permitted. The king razed to the ground the towers built for

the Muslim call to prayers. Mosques were turned into stables and those decaying were not repaired. He further adds that under Akbar many ceremonies of the Hindus had been introduced by the king.[19]

Din-i-Ilahi: To end the religious controversy, Emperor Akbar introduced a new faith officially known as Tauhid-i-Ilahi (Divine Monotheism) which explained as Din-i-Ilahi (Devine Faith) in 1582. At the head of this new religion stood Akbar himself; next after him came Abu-I Fazl and Faizi. It had no book, no priests, no ceremonies, and practically no religious beliefs. The greeting or rallying call of the new faith-Allahu Akbar-was very serious pun, which could simply be the usual pious invocation affirming that God (Allah) is great (Akbar), but in this context suddenly revealed another possible meaning, that Akbar (Akbar) is God (Allah).[20]

Some argued that Akbar had a strong desire to be looked upon, and esteemed as a God, or some great prophet. Badayuni only states that Mirza Jani, Governor of Thatta and other apostates wrote their confession to the following effect- this is the form- "I who am so and so, son of so and so, do voluntarily, and with sincere predilection and inclination, utterly and entirely renounce and repudiate the religion of Islam, which I have seen and heard of my fathers, and do embrace the Divine Religion of Akbar Shah, and do accept the four grades of entire devotion, viz., the sacrifice of Property, Life, Honour, and Religion."[21] It is said that Akbar, on his deathbed, acknowledged the Mohammadan creed, but the evidence on this point is unreliable. Above all his religious system had an important political bearing, for the keynote of his whole policy was the endeavour to unite with a bond of common interest all the diverse social, religious, and racial elements of his empire.

Whenever there was any harm to the Hindus by the royal forces, Akbar always apologized and duly compensated. During the royal campaign Raja Birbal to the Nagarkot near Kangra, the soldiers slaughtered two hundred cows and many Hindus and also damaged the temple. Akbar compensated it by repairing the temple and sending golden umbrella to cover the idol. On another occasion, Akbar ordered the reconstruction of the Hindu temple in Kurukshetra when it had been demolished and a mosque built on its debris. This was perhaps the unique example under Muslim rule when a mosque was destroyed and the temple was built over it. Due to his pro-Hindu policies, Akbar was equated with Lord Rama in some of the bardic traditions of Rajasthan.[22]

Harbans Mukhia writes that a Persian-language text composed in 1025 H./AD 1614, less than a decade after Akbar's death, records the written instruction sent by Akbar to his son Danial, after appointing him Governor of the Deccan and Khandesh in 1601, that 'he should demolish the Jama Mosque at Asir and raise a temple along with the pattern of the Hindus and Kafirs on its site'. The prince, though, wisely sidestepped the implementation of the order.[23]

Akbar adopted Indian style of architecture in almost all his buildings, particularly, Rajput and Jaina style in building the forts and other similar buildings in all over his dominion. The eclectic architecture of Fatehpur Sikri combined Persian with Hindu and Jaina forms. Akbar employed nearly fifteen hundred stonecutters at Agra. Akbar permitted Man Singh to erect several temples in Vrindaban, built of red sandstone, the material usually reserved for Mughal official architecture. These Hindu temples also had many Mughal architectural features.[24]

Assessment of Akbar: Unfortunately, Akbar is being branded as a Muslim icon by some hardcore historians. A Hindutva historian Purushottam Nagesh Oak (P. N. Oak), who had a contract of defaming Turks and Mughal rule in India has left no ground to defame Akbar who had been branded by the contemporary historians as no more a Muslim. He asks a very layman question that when his third-generation Aurangzeb was intolerant and barbarous then how Akbar could be fair to his subjects?[25]

Oak branded Akbar as a foreigner and his invasion on Indian rulers not as the unification of India but the enslavement of India but the fact is that Akbar and his predecessors as well as ancestors spent the whole of their lives in serving the country and loved it as much as any ancient Indian ruler. Their buildings are still benefitting the country even after passing the many hundred years. Oak even puts a question mark on the kind, merciful and benevolent attitude of Akbar. Without referring Ashoka and his bloody Kalinga war, Oak gives the example for Akbar that if an invading gang of dacoits claims that it looked after the children of a village with tender filial care better than their slaughtered parents could, will any man endowed with reason pay any heed to that claim? Likewise when histories claim that Akbar who killed or conquered one Indian ruler after another did so only to lavish more loving care on the Indian people than those slaughtered or conquered Indian rulers ever could one must at once declare the claim as nonsensical.[33] Surely the hundreds of such cases are there in the political and military history of India but Oak claims only Akbar as dacoit and the leader of invading gang. Such biased writings of Hindutva historian would certainly lead to the knowledge of the past to an ashtray.

Whatever the Hindutva historian says is only the foolish and baseless remarks miles away from the reality. If they do not spare Akbar who was a pro-Hindu ruler, it is a matter of concern that how will they treat the other rulers of India. Emperor Akbar was a kind-hearted and true lover of the Hindu-Muslim unity. His Hindu queens enjoyed the full freedom of practising their own religion. He had full trust and faith in his Hindu officers and deployed them on many important battles in which Hindu and Muslims contingents fought together and celebrated the victory together. They were never having even the feeling that they belong to such and such races and religion. During his time there was only one belief and only one religion that was the loyalty to the state and emperor. Whoever, either Hindu or Muslim, raised against state and emperor was brutally crushed and who obeyed them was rewarded and awarded.

Akbar was much careful even to his meanest subjects such as beggars. An attempt was made by him to deal with the beggar by setting apart three colonies for beggars where arrangements were made to maintain them by the royal charity. Khair Pura for the Muslims, Dharm Pura for the Hindus, and Jogi Pura for the Hindu Jogis were the main organized centres. He always primarily looked at the interest of the Hindus more than his forefathers. Akbar died in the Fort at Agra on 13 October 1605, in the fifty-first year of his reign, aged 63. He was buried at Sikandra, in the mausoleum commenced by himself, and finished by his son and successor, Jahangir.

Conclusions: Under his policy of Hindu Religious Revival, Akbar actively patronized Hinduism through state-sponsored initiatives like the Translation Bureau and the removal of discriminatory taxes, fostering a syncretic cultural identity. The study posits that Akbar's policy of *Sulh-i-Kul*, along with Rajput alliances, transformed the Mughal state from a purely Islamic polity into a pluralistic one, legitimizing Hindu practices within the court. Akbar's Hindu promotion and religious patronage policies highlight a strategic shift from a traditional Islamic state to a pluralistic, syncretic empire. Scholars generally agree that these policies were not merely personal spiritual whims but calculated efforts to unify a diverse Indian subcontinent. Akbar's promotion of Hinduism was actually a promotion of Indianness, allowing the Mughal Empire to root itself deeply into the soil of the subcontinent rather than remaining a foreign occupying force.

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2.*The Dawn*, 25 December 2010.
3.The *Rakhi* narrative appears in later accounts *Nainsi Ri Khyat* by Munhot Nainsi and *Dayaldas Ri Khyat* by Dayaldas during the 17th century and became widely popularized in the 19th- 20th centuries, possibly to promote ideals of Hindu-Muslim unity or to tie the festival to a dramatic historical event. The story is inspiring and culturally significant as a symbol, but it is more folklore than verified history.
4.Sri Ram Sharma (1972). *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, Bombay, pp. 36-37.
5.*Ibid*., p. 37.
6.Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama* (Eng. Trans. H. Beveridge, 1939). Vol. III, Calcutta, pp. 865-69. (Akbar's marriages with Hindu princesses and his relations with the Hindu rajas provided the means for bringing Hindu teachers of all shades of opinion to the religious discussions in the Imperial presence. These meetings were thrown open to the adherents of other religions as well. Akbar's relations with the State of Bikaner procured for him the services of Jain minister Karm Chand. The presence of the Portuguese on the western coast enabled the emperor to request for and receive at his court three representatives of their religion. The Parsis were also invited. The discussions in the Ibadat Khana had their immediate influence outside as well. When the Hindus could dispute with impunity with the Muslim scholars' nice points of their respective theologies in the palace, some sort of freedom of views was naturally secured outside its walls as well. *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 35.)
7.Nurul Haq, *Zubdatu-t Tawarikh*, (Elliot, M. S. (1877), *History of India As Told By Its Own Historians, The Mohammadan Period*, Vol. 6, London, p. 190.)
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9.*The Religious Policy*, *op. cit*. p. 38.
10. *Ibid*, p. 39; see also Wendy Doniger (2009). *The Hindus: An Alternative History*, New Delhi, p. 533.
11. Harbans Mukhia (2004). *The Mughals of India*, Maiden, pp. 26-27.
12. *The Hindus, op. cit.*, p. 552.
13. *The Religious Policy*, *op. cit*., pp. 39-40; Sri Ram Sharma (1954). *Maharana Pratap*, Udaipur, pp. 25-26.
14. *Ibid*.
15. *The Hindus, op. cit.*, p. 534.
16. *Ibid*.
17. *The Religious Policy*, *op. cit*., pp. 40-42.
18. Abul Fazl (Eng. Trans. H. Beveredge, 1939). *Akbarnama*, Vol. III, pp. 595-98; *The Religious Policy*, *op. cit*. pp. 42-43. (*Akbarnama* mentions that Jai Mal (son of Mal Deo), who had been sent with his forces to join the amirs in Bengal, died of sunstroke in the vicinity of Chaunsa. His wife, the daughter of Muna Raja, was unwilling to burn; but her son Udi Singh, with a party of his bigoted friends, resolved upon the sacrifice. The matter came to the Emperor's knowledge, and his feeling of justice and humanity made him fear that if he sent messengers to stop the proceedings, some delay might occur, so he mounted his horse, and rode with all speed to the place. As the facts were not fully known, some of these men, in their thoughtlessness, were disposed to resist and make disturbances. But when Akbar arrived, Jagannath and Rai Sal came forward to meet him and brought the leader of these foolish men to him. He accepted their assurance of repentance, and only placed them in confinement. *Akbarnama*, pp. 595-96.)
19. Al-Badayuni, Abdul Qadir Ibn Muluk Shah (Eng. Trans. George S. A. Ranking, 1924). *Muntakhbu-t-Tawarikh*, Vol. II, New Delhi, p. 215; *The Religious Policy*, *op. cit*., pp. 53-54.

20. *The Hindus*, *op. cit*., p. 533.
21. Al-Badayuni, Vol. II, *op. cit*., p. 314.
22. *Ibid*., pp. 534-35.
23. Harbans Mukhia, *op. cit*., pp. 19-20.
24. *The Hindus*, *op. cit*., p. 550.
25. *Who Says*, *op. cit*., p. 12.